

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 NIC-01 IO-14 OMB-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-19 DRC-01

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R 091752Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8999

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 11318

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GW, FR

SUBJECT: BRANDT'S RESIGNATION: PRELIMINARY VIEW FROM  
THE FRENCH PERSPECTIVE

1. SUMMARY. BRANDT'S SUDDEN RESIGNATION HAS COME AS SHOCK TO FRENCH. IN PARIS IT HAS DEEPENED THE ALREADY WIDESPREAD DISAPPOINTMENT REGARDING FUTURE OF EUROPE'S UNITY. IT RAISES FRENCH DOUBTS ABOUT FUTURE OF FRANCO-GERMAN "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH PRO-ATLANTICIST PRO-US SCHMIDT AT HELM OF FRG. ALTHOUGH SCHMIDT WILL BE HARD MAN TO DEAL WITH IN WAY POMPIDOU DEALT WITH BRANDT, WE EXPECT EITHER GISCARD OR MITTERRAND COULD ESTABLISH  
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SATISFACTORY RAPPORT WITH SCHMIDT. COMMUNIST ROLE IN

EVENTS LEADING TO BRANDT'S DEPARTURE HAS NOT BECOME MAJOR ELEMENT IN GISCARD'S ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN, BUT IS BEING PRESENTED BY HIS SUPPORTERS AS TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF "COMMUNIST THREAT" IN FRANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. BRANDT'S SUDDEN RESIGNATION, AND PARTICULARLY THE CIRCUMSTANCES PROMPTING IT, HAVE COME AS SHOCK TO FRENCH. IT HAS DEALT ANOTHER BLOW TO FRANCE'S VISION OF A EUROPE UNITING ALONG LINES FAVORED BY GOF. COMING ON HEELS OF HEATH'S DEFEAT AND SUBSEQUENTLY HARDENING OF UK ATTITUDE TOWARD EC, POMPIDOU'S DEATH, UNCERTAINTY SURROUNDING SITUATION IN ITALY, AND A GENERAL SENSE THAT EUROPE IS COMING APART AT THE SEAMS, BRANDT'S DEPARTURE LEAVES FRENCH OBSERVERS EVEN MORE UNSURE ABOUT FUTURE DIRECTION OF EUROPE AND ITS CONSTITUENT PARTS. AS LE FIGARO PUT IT MAY 8, "THE DEPARTURE OF BRANDT MAKES, WITHOUT ANY DOUBT, THE PICTURE EVEN MORE BLACK."

3. IN VIEW OF "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WHICH FRENCH WANT WITH FRG, FRANCE IS ALWAYS CONCERNED BY POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF ANY SHIFT IN LEADERSHIP OF FEDERAL REPUBLIC. GOF AND POMPIDOU HAD ESTABLISHED WHAT THEY CONSIDERED TO BE SATISFACTORY -- SOMETIMES VERY GOOD -- RELATIONSHIP WITH BRANDT GOVERNMENT. IN PARTICULAR, FRENCH SEEMED GENERALLY SATISFIED -- WITH OBVIOUS EXCEPTION OF WASHINGTON ENERGY CONFERENCE -- THAT PERFORMANCE OF FONMIN SCHEEL DURING FRG'S TENURE IN EC PRESIDENCY DID NOT THWART FRENCH POLICY ON US-EC LINK OR GOF DRIVE FOR GREATER EC COOPERATION ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS. MOREOVER, SCHMIDT'S RECORD DEMONSTRATES THAT HE REGARDS FRG-US RELATIONS AS DECIDEDLY MORE IMPORTANT THAN FRG-FRENCH RELATIONS OR THE TASK OF CONSTRUCTING A UNITED EUROPE ALONG THE LINES ENVISIONED BY THE GOF. FRENCH EXPECT THAT HE WILL BE TOUGH AND INDEPENDENT NEIGHBOR. ON OTHER HAND, MANY IN GOF HAVE BEEN CONCERNED BY POSSIBILITY THAT BRANDT'S OSTPOLITIK MIGHT GET OUT OF HAND -- PARTICULARLY UNDER BRANDT'S SUCCESSOR -- AND LEAD FRG DOWN SLIPPERY SLOPE TOWARD NEUTRALISM. ACCESSION OF SCHMIDT TO CHANCELLORSHIP PROBABLY WILL MODERATE THESE FRENCH FEARS, GIVEN GENERAL PERCEPTION HERE AND ELSE-

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WHERE THAT SCHMIDT IS MORE CONSERVATIVE THAN HIS PREDECESSOR WITH REGARD TO GERMANY'S EASTERN POLICY.

4. WITH REGARD TO EFFECT OF BRANDT'S DEPARTURE ON INTERNAL FRENCH POLITICS, GISCARD AND SCHMIDT HAVE DEVELOPED A GOOD RELATIONSHIP BASED ON THEIR CONTACTS AND MUTUAL INTERESTS WHILE FINANCE MINISTERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS. FURTHERMORE, AS QUAI OFFICIAL

RECENTLY POINTED OUT TO US, BOTH GISCARD AND SCHMIDT  
GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF BEING LESS MOTIVATED BY IDEOLO-  
GICAL CONCERNS THAN BRANDT OR POMPIDOU IN HIS LAST  
YEAR, AND ARE MORE LIKELY TO ADOPT PRAGMATIC, FLEXIBLE  
APPROACHES TO SOLVING PROBLEMS. MITTERRAND REPORTEDLY  
HAS GREAT RESPECT FOR BRANDT AND WE EXPECT HE WOULD HAVE  
NO DIFFICULTY ESTABLISHING RAPPORT WITH SCHMIDT BASED ON  
THEIR COMMON SOCIALIST AFFILIATIONS AND REALIZATION  
THAT CLOSE FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS REMAIN A KEY TO  
EUROPE'S SECURITY. MITTERRAND'S RELATIONSHIP WITH

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FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY, HOWEVER, WILL TEMPER THEIR RELATIONSHIP.

5. IN TERMS OF FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, SOME OF GISCARD'S SUPPORTERS WILL SEEK TO FOCUS FRENCH VOTERS' ATTENTION ON GUILLAUME CASE AS CONCRETE EXAMPLE OF DANGERS INHERENT IN COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN FRENCH GOVERNMENT. IN FACT, GISCARD SUPPORTERS LECANUET AND RETIRED GENERAL PAUL STEHLIN ALREADY HAVE ISSUED STATEMENTS WARNING OF THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES THAT COULD FLOW FROM COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN FRENCH GOVERNMENT, CONFIDENTIAL

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AS SHOWN BY THE GUILLAUME CASE. AS OF TODAY, WE DOUBT THAT THIS ISSUE WILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON OUTCOME OF ELECTION. ANY MARGINAL EFFECT COULD WORK IN GISCARD'S FAVOR. AS ELECTION CAMPAIGN INTENSIFIES MOVING TOWARD MAY 19 BALLOTING, HOWEVER, WE DO NOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY THAT GUILLAUME CASE AND BRANDT'S RESIGNATION MAY BECOME LARGER FACTOR IN THE CAMPAIGN STRATEGY OF A GISCARD SEARCHING FOR WAYS TO SQUEAK THROUGH IN WHAT EVERYONE AGREES WILL BE A VERY CLOSE ELECTION. IRWIN

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